



To the right honorable
my verie good Lord, Robert
Deuoreux, Earle of Essex and Ewe,
Vicount of Hereford, Lord Ferrers of
Chartley, &c. Master of the Queenes
Maiesties horſe, knight of the moſt noble order
of the Garter, and one of her Maieſties moſt ho-
nourable priue Counſel, the continuall encreaſe
of Gods euerlaſting fauour, peace and
comfort in this, and in the
world to come.

88; 115

MAnie men (right Hencu-
rable) when they intend
ſome euil, I meane when
they haue reſolved free-
ly and holdly to trade in
ſome ſinne without check and control-
ment, doe ſeek to ſhroude themſelues
vnder the cloth and countenance of
ſome great perſons of Worſhip and
Honour. If my purpoſe or praſtiſe
were ſuch, I might iuſtly feare to bee
A 2 croſſed

The Epistle

crossed and cursed in this my enterprise. The searcher of all hearts knoweth, that my purpose, prayers, and endeavours (through his gracious assistance) are, and shall bee, to keepe a good conscience in my ministerie, to walke in the vprightnesse of my heart, and to bee kept blamelesse to the coming of Iesus Christ. In this resolution, may it seeme good vnto your Honour, as you haue already (at the earnest and humble sute of manie my verie good and worshipfull friends) receiued me to fauour: so still to continue your most honourable protection for my further encouragement in well doing. May it also please your honourable and religious disposition, to comfort and countenance this Mite, and small measure of comfort, which according to grace receiued, I haue once addressed, and now the second time published, and enlarged for the reliefe of such as grieue and groane vnder the heauie burthen of their sinnes. Behold I presume to present it vnto your Honour as the best present I haue, to testifie my humble dutie, seruice, and thankfulnessse

Dedicatorie.

fulnesse. And if by Gods good fauour
and blessing there shall be any one sen-
tence, worde, syllable, or letter, which
may bring, or adde comfort to you or
yours, I shall be occasioned the rather,
heartily to blesse God for so great mer-
cie, and to pray more instantly,
that y^r Honour may
be blessed for
euer.

*Your honours most humble and
bounden seruant in the Lord,*

Robert Linaker.

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A COMFORTABLE
TREATISE FOR THE
reliefe of such as are affli-
cted in conscience.

It is not long since I promi-
sed you some small remem-
brance of my hearty desire to
affoorde you some comfort,
concerning the inward affliction of your
minde, if the Lord should any way enable
me thereunto. I haue now therefore (ac-
cording to the measure of grace receiued)
performed that my promise, as you shall
vnderstand by reading these leaues follow-
ing. Whereby if you shall reape so much
comfort, as from the depth of my heart, I
entreat the Lord you may, I shal account
my selfe for euer most nearely bound by
all maner of dutie, and thankfulness vnto
his blessed maiesty. Howsoever it fall out,
you shall receiue and keep this poore trea-
tise by you, as an vndoubted record of my
good meaning towards you, and some o-
thers, of whose particular estate I haue

Inward afflictions
are neither
common nor
easie.

some certaine know: Iudge, and for whome
I pray most heartily, as I do for you.

I confesse your affliction is neither com-
mon nor easie to be borne. And that because
it is not outward, but inward, not of the
body but of the minde. For as Salomon
saith, A sorrowful minde drieth the
bones. Proverbs 17.22. Again, A man
will sustaine his infirmities, but a wound-
ed spirit who can beare it? Psou. 18.
14. His meaning is, that no outward
griefe or discommoditie whatsoever, but
may be indured, and borne with great pa-
tience and constancie. but if the conscience
be wounded, and stricken with the feeling
of Gods wrath for sin, or any other great
cause, there is neither man nor woman
which is able to endure, and beare it out
long, without great & gracious assistance
from God. That this is so, you can speak
of your own experience, yet for your com-
fort, remember that you are not alone. the
due consideration whereof may not a little
cheere vp your heart. For you reade of
some in the scriptures, some you heare of,
and some you know your selfe, who grone
vnder the same burden, whose consciences
are set very hard vpon the racke, & whose
pooze

for an afflicted conscience. 3

poore soules are in little ease, as well as yours.

This is one principall point, which I would haue you thinke vpon continually, but then especially, when Sathan would beare you down, that you are alone in this kinde of affliction, and that no body is so troubled as you are. For this purpose you may remember that sweete sentence of the holy apostle, wherein he doeth you to vnderstand, that the same afflictions which you endure, are also accomplished and suffered of your other bretheren which are abroad in the world: as if he should say, let not such a thought as this is ouer-
sway you, that you should thinke you haue no fellowes. For there bee a number of Gods deere childre, who are as much and as often troubled with the same griefe of minde aswell as you. For as there is no man so wise, so strong, or so rich, but there be many as wise, as strong, and as wealthie: so there is none so greatly grieved in body or minde, but there be many who are as deepe in the same griefe as they be. Again, if your wily enemy shal by this kind of temptation assaye to wound your weake conscience, that you belong not to God, because

A principal comfort for the troubled minde.

1. Pet. 5. 9.

The best affected are your partners

Another chiefly comfort against Satrans temptation.

because the correction is so sharpe, and the rod wherewith you are beaten so smarting, you may boldly step to him, wying his weapon out of his hand, & therewith thrust him thorow: for the manner of your chastisement doeth proue verie strongly to your conscience, that you are highly in Gods fauor, and that because you are not only partaker of that correction wherof all the sonnes and daughters of God are partakers (for so many as are without correction are bastards & not children) but of that kind of chastisement, which only is proper to those, who aboue many others haue bin in greater fauor with God. For example, Dauid was a man (as you haue learned from the scriptures) according to Gods own hart, that is, such a one as the Lord set great stoye by, he notwithstanding was thoroughly whipt with this three stringed whip, as you may read at large not in one but in many Psalmes, by name the first Psalme throughout, a great part of the two and twentieth, the eight and thirtie the whole Psalme, the one and fiftie, and manie moe, which you maye find by diligent reading in the booke of the Psalmes, where you shall vnderstand that

Hebr. 12. 8.

Dauid was greatly
loved of God,
and grievously
afflicted.

for an afflicted conscience.

5

that his estate is all one with yours.

Againe you may remember that Paul the Apostle was a chosen vessel, whom God had separated from his mothers wombe: and therewithall you can not bee ignorant. how sharply he was handled, when the messenger of Sathan was sent to boxe and busset him verie sore, and that for a long season: so that although he prayed often and earnestly, yet could he not be deliuered. This only he receiued as an answer from the Lord, that his grace should be sufficient to vnderprep and slay him in his greatest temptation. for my power (saith he) is made perfect thowrow weaknesse. In this resolution he rested himselfe as well contented, vntill such time as the Lord should grant him full release. These are choise examples of choise persons, and not many such to be found in the whole bodie of the Scripture: that you may consider how great a priuilege of fauour God hath vouchsafed vpon you, to make you equall with his dearest children, and that in such afflictions, as for their suffering of them, they are aboue many thousands most renowned. But why stand I vpon these examples, when as Iesus Christ

himselfe

Acts 9. 15.
Galat. 1. 15.
Paul a chosen
vessel sharply
handled.

2. Cor. 12. 7, 8, 9.

Paſſe not by this
example without
ſome good medi-
tation.

Trouble of mind
a great priuilege
of Gods fauour.

Mat. 3. 17.

The Sonne of
God must trou-
ble.

Luke 22. 44.

your affliction is
but a flea biting
to that which
your Saviour hath
suffered for your
sake, that you
might haue ease.

Mat. 27. 46.

himselfe (being the sonne and heire in
whom onely the Father is most highly
well pleased) was not onely in measure
and merrie thus chastised as you are, but
as we say commonly, beaten without mer-
cy, yea hee was turned and beaten, so as
through the exceeding great anguish of his
soule, he sweat such a sweat in the garden,
as neuer man sweat the like, that is, drops
like drops of blood, trickling downe to the
ground. Yea further, being brought and
hanged vpon the crosse (beside all the vil-
lante offered and done to him by the mali-
cious cruel Jewes) his owne father hand-
led him so extremely, not like a father, but
as a most iust iudge, that he could not any
longer bite in his griefe, but in great bit-
ternesse he breakes out into these wordes
savouring of deepe despaire, my God, my
God, why hast thou forsaken me? These
wordes, I say, saue strongly of despaire,
because he cries out that God had forsak-
en him: yet was he farre from despaire,
because in the greatest conflict with Hell
and Sathan, his whole trust was in God,
and therefore with great confidence, not
once, but againe he doubleth his speech
saying, My God, my God. Thus you
haue

for an afflicted conscience. 7

haue not onely many of the faithfull, but
the sonne of God, (clad in your nature)
more then a partner with you in your suf-
ferings: which I haue aileadged to this
end, that you may know that as al things
worke for the best to those that loue
God, euen to them that are called of
purpose: so this affliction of yours, which
because it is so sharp, that theretore worke
your good a great deale the rather. For,
experience teacheth, that that purgation
which for the time doth work most strong-
ly, and putteth the patient to the greatest
paine, doth in the end bring the most ease
to him who hath receiued it. But it may
be you will take exception against this last
example of Christ Iesus, and say that hee
was not so tormented for his owne, but
for your sinne, because he was without
sinne. Therein you speake most truly for
the Apostle saith, Hee was deliuered to
death for our finnes, as if he shoud say,
whatsoever grieue or torment hee endured
liuing, or dying. hee endured it for our
saues, that the whole fruit & comfort therof
might redound to vs. And to this agreeeth
that which is witten in the first Epistle of
Peter, Who his owne selfe bare our sins

Rom 8. 28.

The sharpest af-
fliction worke
the sweetest
comfort.

One exception.

Hebr. 4. 15.

1. Iohn 2. 2, 3.

Rom 4. 25.

1. Pet. 1. 24.

in

in his bodie on the tree, that we being deliuered from sinne, should liue in righteousness, by whose stripes we are healed. From henceforth therefore may you reape no small comfort, for the peace of your conscience in the greatest heate of temptations. For in as much as he suffered not for his owne, but for your sinne, you may be therefore well assured that you shall neuer taste of those hellish tormentes, which your sinnes haue deserued, and that because your suretie, your mediator, your Saviour Iesus Christ hath in your nature, but in his owne person (euen to the uttermost of Gods iustice) suffered them for you, that you might neuer suffer them, but be fully and for euer discharged, both in this world, and in the world to come. For as the Apostlie witnesseth. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Iesus. Were againe I know wel you will thus reply that you will grant, there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Iesus, & must needs be true. But all the doubt lies in this, whether you your selfe bee in Christ Iesus or not. For of that cannot you be persuaded. If you could be assured thereof,

then

Christ hath suffered the tormentes of hell, that we might not suffer them, yea, that you may neuer suffer them.

Rom. 8. 1.

Another exception.

To be in Christ Iesus is true hap-
pines to him or
her which is as-
sured thereof.

for an afflicted conscience.

9

then you would not doubt, but you were without all danger of condemnation. But this is one point, which doth work no small trouble in your conscience. Go to then, let this be one chief point to deal with you in.

And first to begin withall, let me ask you this one question. And I do not only pray, but on Gods behalfe for his glory, and the good of your soul, I charge you to answer me plainly & truly. Had you euer any assurance of saluation in al your life? were you euer perswaded by the preaching of þ word to be saued by the death of Christ Iesus? did you euer feel the power of true repentance in your soule by these marks, þ you were more grieued & sorie at the heart for your sins, then for any thing in the whole world? did you, and doe you beare a deadly hatred against them, as against the diuell himselfe? did you, and doe you purpose to the uttermost of your power, to forbeare and forswear the practise of them all, and to walke in holinesse and righteousness all the dayes of your life? did that worde which you haue heard so long, so soundly, and so powerfully preached to your conscience, which you reade so diligently, wherein ~~you~~ meditate and take so

A great charge

Once assured and euer assured of saluation,

An vnassured conscience for sinne, a deadly hatred, a sound purpose of amendment, are vnsubiect marks of Gods childre.

1. Cor. 7. 9, 10, 11

Luke 7. 19.

See you answered to euerie article truly as you will auerit at your peril.

Psal. 1. 2.

Psal. 1. 8.

you

great

great delight as that you count al worldly things but dung in comparason thereof: did that word, 3 say, neuer speake peaceable to your conscience by the holy ministration: did it neuer giue you assurance and toy in the holy Ghost: did it neuer worke such sweete comfort, as no worldly toy could be like vnto it: did you neuer heare such a sermon from your owne godly and carefull pastor, or from any other, that you haue said at your coming home, you would not for all the worlds good but you had heard it, because it was so sweete, and comfortable: did you neuer speake that worde, from the true feeling of the heart, which might warrant your soule that you are in Christ Iesus: If this worde hath had this gracious and powerfull worke in your soule (as I am fully perswaded it hath, and your selfe cannot denie it: for if you doe, beside the great wrong you offer your own soule, you trespassse against that spirit, whereby you haue bene sealed vnto the day of redemption) then know assuredly you are so graffed into y^e body of Christ Iesus, as nothing shall be able to sepeare you from that loue which the Lord your God beareth you in his deare Sonne, in whom

Ephel. 4. 30.

Gods loue is
everlasting and
exchangeable.

for an afflicted conscience. II

Whome hee hath so loued you once, as hee Iohn 13.26
must needs loue you for euer. And that
bicause the Euangelist saith, whome hee
loues he loues to the end. For the gifts
and calling of God are without repen-
tance. Againe, God is not as man that Rom. 11.29.
hee should lie, neither as the sonne of
man that hee should repent. Hath he Num. 23.19.
saide, and shall he not do it? and hath he
spoken it, and shall hee not accomplish
it? No, be you well assured, and write vp-
on it, that the strength of Israel wil not 1. Sam. 15.29.
lie nor repent. For, as the apostle James
saith, with him there is no variablenesse Iam. 1.17.
nor shadowing by turning. Let these
and such like places be alway in your re-
membꝛance, and giue your selfe vnto the
continuall meditation thereof. For they
shall stand you in great stead, if you can
call them to minde, when your temptati-
ons shal assaile you with greatest strength.
And forget not, often to thinke of such
excellent places as that is, which you find
written in the eight chapter of the Epistle
written to the Romanes, and the sixe and
thirtieth verse, after this manner, What
shal separat vs from the loue of Christ?
shall tribulation or anguish, or persecu-
tion,

Therefore reade
them often and
continually that
you may alwayes
haue them at
your fingers end.

tion, or famine, or nakednesse, or peril, or sword, &c. **20**, I am persuaded, that neither death nor life, angels nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any creature shall be able to separate vs from the loue of God which is in Iesus Christ our Lord. And full sweet to this purpose are those words of the holie prophet David. The Lorde is neere vnto them that are of a contrite heart, and will saue such as be afflicted in spirit. Great are the troubles of the righteous: but the Lorde deliuereth him out of them all. Againe, weeping may abide at euening, but ioy commeth in the morning. But you finde no such matter you saie, for this trouble of minde hath holden you, not onelic nights and daies, but weekes and moneths, yea and yeres, and yet you can finde no ease nor comfort. Be it so, yet bee not therefore out of heart, for the longer it bee before you haue ease, the more welcome it shal be when it commeth. And to this purpose are the wordes of the Wise-man where hee saith, The hope that is deferred, is the fainting of the heart, but when

Psal. 34. 18, 19.

Psal. 30. 5.

for an afflicted conscience. 13

when the desire commeth it is a tree of life. Lastly, let the words of Eliphaz the Temanite be fast bound vnto your soule, which you shall find thus reported in the booke of Job, the first chapter 17, 18, 19. verses. Beholde, blessed is the man whome God correcteth: therefore refuse not thou the correction of the Almighty. For hee maketh the wound and bindeth it vp: hee smiteth, and his handes make whole. Hee shall deliuer thee in sixe troubles, and in the seauenth the euill shall not touch thee. The summe & drift of all that which hath bin set downe from the beginning to this present place, is to encourage you concerning the manner of your affliction, which though it be very sharp & bitter to y^e flesh, because no chastisement for the present seemeth to be ioyous but greenous: yet there is a time, when it shall bring the quiet fruit of righteousness vnto them that are exercised thereby. In regard hereof Moses the man of God saith, that

Hebr. 12. 11.

A principal comfort for the afflicted soule.

Deut. 8. 16.

B 2

ment,

Afflictions better tokens of Gods loue then riches and prosperitie.

Hebr. 1. 3.

Matth. 5. 10.

Hebr. 2. 10.

2. Tim. 2. 11, 12.

Act. 14. 22.

Rom. 8. 28.

ment, you may gather more vndoubted assurance of Gods euertlasting fauour towards your soule by these inward afflictions, then by any outward prosperitie of anie worldy blessing whatsoever, whether it be of health, of riches, or such like. And that, because in these your afflictions you are most like vnto your head Christ Iesus, who though hee were the right sonne and heire of the whole world: yet had hee not a house to hide his head in, as himselfe confesseth. But it pleased the Father (seeing hee would bring manie children vnto glorie) to consecrate the prince of their saluation through afflictions. Now, as the holy Apostle reasoneth. This is a true saying, if we be dead with him, we shal also liue with him. If we suffer with him, we shal also reigne with him. To be short, the Holy ghost saith, That we must by many afflictions enter into the kingdome of God. And once againe, Those whom he knew before, hee also predestinated to be made like to the Image of his Sonne, that he might be the first-borne among many brethren. So that you may wel perceiue you are not thus farre forth, any whit out
of

of your way, but you keepe the roade, euen the good way which leaueth you as streight as a line vnto the kingdome of heauen. And therefore as no trauellet, who keepe his right way and knowes it, wil be sorow, but very glad, because he trusteth to come to that place, where his desire is to abide: so no more cause haue you to be grieued, but rather to reioyce, because you know you walke in the streight path, which shal bring you to that place of your abode, where you would so faine be, and where you shal abide most blessed and happie for euer. Thus much haue I thought good to offer vnto your godlie meditations, to encourage you concerning the maner of your afflictions. The Lord grant you a rich portion of his spirite, that your soule may reape a gracious blessing.

Now you shall further vnderstand in few wordes, what shall be the substance of all the matter which foloweth in the remainder of this poore treatise. I purpose so neere as I can, to gather together those obiections, which you and others doe object against your selues: and so farre as the Lord shall affoord me his grace, I intend in order to answer them.

Afflictions the
highway to hea-
uen.

The substance
of the whole
Treatise follow-
ing.

The first obiection
and answer.

The troubled
minde doubts of
Gods fauour.

A needefull point
therefore marke
it well,

Harken to Gods
voice for he seeketh
you.

The first and principall obiection (so far as I can conceiue & learne by conference with you, and with so many as I haue any acquaintance) is this, What you doubt much of Gods fauour towards you, that you feare it greatly you are not the child of God, and if you be, yet can not you be thereof certainly perswaded. This obiection hath alreadye bene answered in part: not withstanding because it is as the foundation of al the other obiections, I will in hope of Gods gracious assistance indeuor my selfe to answer it more fully, for your better contentmēt. First therefore I would gladly learne this one thing of you, or of anie other (who is your partner in these temptations) who it is y^e beareth you so greatly in hand, you are not the child of God. If you answer, your conscience, through the greatnesse of your sinne both tel you so: then do I againe demaund of you, who it is that sets your conscience a worke to hyge this point & to what end. If it be Gods spirit, you may be right glad, because then it is for your good, namely y^e you may go out of your selfe, & secke the forgiveness of your sinnes and euermoring saluation in Christ his death and obedience

for an afflicted conscience. 17

bedience, to the full assurance of Gods
sauior, and the euerlasting peace of your
conscience. But speake the truth, is it not
rather a strong temptation of Sathan
your deadly enemy to trouble the peace
of your conscience, and if it be possible, to
driue you to desperation. If it be so, as
I feare it greatly, then say I vnto you,
there is no cause why you should beleene
him. First because he is a lyer. Secondly
because he is your enemy, who meanes
you no good at al. That he is a lyar it is
manifest, because he hath bene so from
the beginning. And he cannot now
chaunge his nature. It is as much against
his nature to speake the truth, as it is pos-
sible that God should lie, who is onely &
euer true. Therefore, there is no cause
why you should beleue such a common
liar as the Deuill (who will lie as fast as
a dogge can trot, as wee vse to say in
our common speech. You haue iust cause
therefore to except against him in this re-
spect. Againe, you neede not doubt
that hee is your enemy, and that to the
death; because hee is the common ac-
cuser of the bretheren, and like a roar-
ing Lion goeth about continually see-

Hearken not to
sathan, for he
hath vowed your
destruction.

Ioh. 8. 44.

Heb. 6. 18.

Rom. 3. 4.

Reuel. 12. 10.
1. Pet. 5. 8.

T

No credit to bee
given to the deuill
though he speak
the truth, because
his meaning is
badde.

Marke the deuils
cunning.

The holy vse of
the Ministerie,

Rom. 7. 7.

Regard and re-
uerence the mi-
nisterie if you
loue your soule.

king whom he may deuoure. In regard
whereof you are not to hearken to him, or
beleue anie thing he shall saie vnto you,
no although he speake the trueth. And my
reason is, because he will not tell you the
trueth, to helpe, but to hinder you, not to
cheere, but to choake you, not to saue, but
to spill your bloud. And whereas you will
replie, you cannot denie, but hee saith the
trueth concerning the greatnesse of your
sinnes, and that iust condemnation which
you haue deserued for them. I answere
thereto after this manner. That you are
not to take the knowledge of your sinnes
from Sathan, because he will not tell you
the trueth, and the whole trueth as it is in
deede. For either he will pare your sins,
and make them lesse then they be, to make
you altogether carelesse, or else hee will
make them greater then they be, to throw
you headlong into despaire. But you are
to take the perfite knowledge of your sins,
from the true vnderstanding of the Lawe
of God, fast girded to your conscience,
by the holie ministerie, which GOD
hath ordained for this purpose, that you
maie thereby come to true and vnfained
repentaunce of all your sinnes, and bee
saued

saved through faith in Christ his blood.
 For the blood of Christ doth cleanse you
 from all sinne. And if you will yet reason
 against your selfe, that your sinnes are so
 great, that you can gather no assurance of
 Gods fauour towards you: then let mee
 offer to your cōsideration some one or two
 examples of such notorious knowne sin-
 ners, as the world cried shame of, and yet
 repenting had their sinnes forgiven them.
 I meane of set purpose to make choise of
 those persons and people, who in the
 scriptures are noted to be most infamous.
 Because you and such as are so exercised
 as you are, doe indeed charge your selues
 further than you ought. For you make
 your selues so bad, as though none were
 to be compared vnto you, or as though
 God had no mercie in store for you. And
 hereupon it comes to passe, that almost
 there is not any word of God which can
 bring peace vnto your troubled consci-
 ences. I intend therefore to match you
 so, and with such, as you shall be forced to
 confesse you are outmatched. The end shal
 be this, to bring glad tidings to your hea-
 uie and sorrowful soule, that God both is
 and will be more fauourable to you, then
 you

1. Iohn. 1. 7.

Examples of no-
 torious sinners
 who repented
 and were par-
 doned.

No easie matter
 to comfort a
 troubled mind.

Reasons to persuade the afflicted.

The Lord persuade your heart.

Marie Magdalen
a notorious and
knowne sinner.

you can as yet be persuaded. For if God haue shewed mercie to those, who by reason of their knowne sins, were in all mens iudgement further from mercie: how can he denie you mercie, who neuer brake into that outrage of sin, and yet doe most humble sue vnto him for mercie. That good master, who forgauē his bad seruant at his owne intreatie, ten thousand talents, would not haue borne hard vnto him, who ought but a hundred pence, if he had sued vnto him, as he did to his cruell and vnmmercifull fellowe seruant, who by no meanes would bee entreated, to shewe that fauour in a little debt, which was shewed him in a verie great summe. Remember, I pray you, that you haue to deale with a God, who is farre more mercifull: and therefore you may bee sure to find more fauour. You reade in the Gospell of Saint Luke the seuenth chapter, from the thirtie and six verse vnto the end of the chapter, of Marie Magdalen, and of her behauiour, being a woman not only vehementlie suspected of lewde life, but openlie knowne for a common harlot, and generallie so taken, as may appeare by the wordes of Simon the Pharisee, who recei.

receiuing Iesus Christ into his house,
thought neuer to deale the better, but
much the worse of him, because hee suffe-
red so bad a woman to come so neare him,
but especially to lay any hande vpon him,
as to wash his feete with her teares, and
to wipe them with the haire of her head:
to kisse his feet, and to annoint them with
ointment. Altho this notwithstanding, marke
what marueylous great mercie Iesus
Christ shewes to this so wretched and sin-
full woman. First he takes in very good
part, whatsoeuer she had done vnto him,
whereas Simon looked he should not on-
ly haue shewed his great disliking of her
dealing, but to haue shaken her vp, & that
rondly for her lawlesnes, to come so neare
him without his loue and leaue. Secondly
he is so farre off from misliking her beha-
niour in that present action, that hee both
highly commend her to Simon, and that
after so special a maner, that he giues him
to vnderstand he takes better liking of her
kindnesse, then of all the great prouision
which he had made for him: because what-
soeuer she did, she did it with an vpright
heart towards him, and in a sincere loue
for the good of her own soule. Thirdly for
the

Luke 7. 36, 37.
The hypocrite
Pharisee is offend-
ed with Christ.

Jesus Christ likes
Maries doings.

Christ commends
Maries reas-
more then
mons great
dinner.

Thy sinnes
forguen her.

15

Luke 7. 47.

Christ speaks
particularly to
Marie for her
comfort.

Vers 48. 50.

5
Marie's happy
farewell.
Verse 50.

The application
of the last
example.

Apply the plai-
ster to the sore
that your soule
may haue ease,

the ease of her heart, which nowe was
griuously tormented for her wicked life
past (as appeared by the abundance of
teares she powred out) hee saith to Si-
mon in her hearing, that many sinnes
were forguen her. Fourthly, that she
might take better hold of his wordes, and
apply them to her selfe for the comfort of
her owne soule, he turnes his speech par-
ticularly vnto her, and saith in more spe-
ciall manner, Thy sinnes are forguen
thee, Thy faith hath saued thee. Lastly,
that she might depart a ioyfull and blessed
woman indeed, wanting nothing which
might make for the peace of her consci-
ence, he giues her a most sweet farewell,
saying, Go in peace.

Now let mee reason a little with you,
concerning this woman, can you when
you haue strained out your sinnes to the
vttermost, make your selfe as bad as this
woman. No, you cannot, you may not, you
dare not. For how dare you slander your
owne selfe, when it is not any way lawfull
to slander another? and if you bee bound
to tender the good name of your brother
as well as your owne, then it must needes
follow, you are by nature most bound to
tender

tender your owne. If then you cannot denie, but you are by great ods outmatched in this example, shew me what sound reason you can bring to proue, why Iesus Christ should not entreat you as kindly, & shew you as much fauour as he shewed to Mary, especially when as your sins (euen by your own confession) are neither so notorious, nor so apparant, and open in outward transgressions, to be seene and iudged by the world, as hers were. And yet for all that your teares as manie, your hart as much tormented with sorow, your kindnesse as great to Christ in his members, and your desire as great to be whole his at his commaundement. Did he regard her, and will he reiect you: did he not shew her a hard countenance, and will hee looke so wrelie vpon you: did not she let so much as anie one teare fall in vaine: did her teares moue him to compassion: and doe you thinke he will not haue pitie vpon you & put vp all your teares into his bottell: were many sinnes forgiven her, and can any of your sins be unpardoned: was her faith strong to saue her, and shall your faith want strength to saue you: did Christ for a farewell, bid her go in peace, and wil

The teares you shed are not spilt for the Lord hath put them all in his bottell.

A familiar resemblance.

He that forgives
a great debt, will
readily forgive a
small.

he send you away emptie without peace:
No verelie. If you thinke so, you thinke
much amisse, and therfore such a thought
must not depart without some due chastise-
ment. Suppose there is a man of so great
wealth, that hee knowes no ende of his
goodes. And suppose that this man hath
many debtors, which owe him verie great
summes of money. As for example, some
owe him thousands, some hundreds, and
some many scores of pounds. Amongst
them all there is one pooze man, who owes
him twentie pounds, which hee is no way
able to pay, nor anie pemie thereof, if hee
should bee cast in prison, and lie there till
he rot. If this great rich man shall cause
a proclamation to be made, that all and
euerie one of his debtors should come to
him, and he will frankly and freely forgive
them all. although the debt were neuer so
great, vpon this condition, that they will
confesse and acknowledge the debt to bee
due, whether it were moze or lesse. If the
pooze man should come in among the rest
of the debtors, and confesse himself to owe
him such a summe as I haue named, lay
forth his pouertie, and therewithall hum-
bly vpon his knees with teares beseech
in

for an afflicted conscience. 25

him to shewe some fauour toward him: should not he in this case haue good hope to be forgiven, especially if before his face he should see one to haue thousands forgiven for a word of his mouth.

These things concerne you verie nearly, and therefore I am so much the rather to intreat you, not to make wash way of them, but as they do nearly concerne you and your good, so to lay them neare vnto your heart, by reuerent meditation, that your soule may finde a gracious and comfortable blessing. The second example whereof I would haue you to make diligent consideration, is written in the first chapter of the prophet Esay, and the eighteenth vers, where the Lord makes a marvellous large offer of great mercy vnto a people, who had highly offended him, I meane the people of Israel. To these Israelites in most louing maner the Lord speaketh, Come, saith he, let vs reason together, though your sinnes were as crimson, they shall bee made white as snow, though they were red as scarlet, they shall be as wooll. What the offer is you heare, and how great it is, your selfe is able to iudge: euen so large an offer of mercie

Labour to apply
it you desire to
haue comfort.

A second example
of the great
rebellion of
Israel.

Esa. 1. 18.

mercy as none can be greater. In one word, it is as if the Lord should say. O Israel thou hast sinned against me thy good God most grievously, and hast deserved that I should not onely punish thee sharply, but for ever cast thee cleane out of my favour. Notwithstanding upon thine unfeigned repentance for all thy sinnes past, and a resolute and full purpose of amendment hereafter, I am content to forgive & forget them all, and to give thee my gracious generall pardon, to acquit and discharge thee of all and euerie one of thine iniquities, that not so much as anie one of them shall bee able to condemne thee in this world, or in that which is to come.

A general pardon
offered.

The cursed con-
dition of the Is-
raelites.

Here I pray you consider a little with me the estate and condition of this people, at the time of this louing offer, and therewith also consider, what cause there was why the Lord should shew so great fauour to this people. Begin you at the second verse of the forenamed chapter, and marke aduisedly what manner of complaint the Lord takes by against them. First hee calles heauen and earth with all the creatures therein to witnesse their rebellion
and

An appeal to all
the creatures of
obedience.

for an afflicted conscience: 27

and disobedience against him. Secondly ² Vnthankfulnes, he challengeth them of so monstrous vnthankfulnes, that it is too too shamefull: for he shewes they were so farre gone in this point, that the brute beasts, euen the ore and the asse, which were durme and without reason, were more thankfull in their kinde, to their owners for their fodder, then they were for so many thousands of blessings, which he had bestowd vpon them. Thirdly in the third verse he draws out against them, a very substanti- ³ A large indite-
ment both for words and matter, ment, wherein he layes forth all their ill behauiour, and paints them out in most liuely colours, calling them with great detestation, A finceiull nation, a people laden with iniquitie, a seede of the wicked, corrupt children. Fourthly, hee ⁴ A prooffe of the
prooues this inditement and euery part inditement, thereof, by charging them to their faces with murder, and blood, by reason of their horrible oppression, and crueltie towards all in generall, but more specially to. Verse 15. 17.
wards the poore, the widow, the stranger and the fatherlesse, all this is done in the fifteenth and seuenteenth verses. In the practise of which sinnes, and all other
kind

Verse 10.

Exod. 19. 5, 6

Verse 11, 12, 13.
14. 15.

Hypocrites in the
service of God,

Sam. 7. 14.

Verse 5. 6

kind of filchines, they were such exquisite workemen, that they were more like the people of Sodom and Gomorra (whom the Lord with fire from heauen destroyed) then that people whom the Lord had chosen, and pickt out from all the nations of the world, to be a peculiar and a holie people vnto himselfe. Finally, they were such hollow hearted hypocrites in all the outward exercises of religion, that the Lord detested all their sacrifices, and utterly abhorred all their prayers, as you may reade in the 11. 12. 13. 14. and 15. verses. To make an end with so bad a people, as lightly could not be worse, they were so desperate, and hardened in their wickednesse, that they were past cure, and no hope of verie small (if anye at all of the greater part) of their amendment, because the Lord had assayed by all good meanes, to bring them to some goodnes. He had wooed them with blessings, and feared them with his iudgements: he had chastised them often with rods, and many times scorged them with the plagues of the children of men: but all in vaine, the more they were corrected, the worse they were, and grew to

for an afflicted conscience, 29

to be more desperate, as appeares out of the fift and sixt verses. After all this bad dealing, as though they had beene no such leude and gracelesse people, or as though they had not offended so grievously, nay rather as though the Lord had done them some great wrong. he seekes to them (wheras they should haue both sued and sought to him) that there might be a treatie of peace, and a full reconciliation made betweene them. For which purpose he offers in most friendly and louing manner to common with them, saying, Come let vs reason together.

The Lord in-
treats peace at
their hands
which had highly
offended him.

Nowe giue me leaue once againe to deale with your conscience in this point. Charge your soule with as many sinnes as euer you can possibly call to minde, in any parte of your life, either before or since your calling, in ignorance or in knowledge, in youth or in age, howsoeuer, or with whom soeuer you haue committed them, either by thought, word or deed, in the light of the day, or in the darknesse of the night. Bind them all and euerie one of them in one bundle, cast them into the one end of the ballance: when you haue so done, take vp the sinnes of this

A particular application of the former example.

people, put them into the other ende and weigh them together without anye deceit. Nay, for this once you shall haue leaue to shew your best cunning, and see if you can make your ende heavier. If you can not (as I am sure you can not, except you will vse some notable deceit, which will be soone found out, so as you shall neuer be able to answer it) then knowe you, and let your conscience also vnderstand, that if the Lord saide vnto a wicked people, frosen in sinne, come, hee doeth much more saie to you, who woulde so faine leaue your sinne, come, and againe come, let vs two reason together. For, although thy sinnes be in thine owne sight as crimson, yet shall they bee made as white as snowe, though they bee (to thy seeming) as redde as euer was the scarlet, yet they shall bee as white as any wooll, because they shall bee all so perfectly scowped and washed in the blood of Iesus Christ, as not any one of them shall be able to condemne thee, either in this world or in the world to come.

And that you may bee the more bolde to come, behold your sweet sauour (who being made sin for you that you might be

A strong reason
to prouoc and
perswade.

Rom. 8. 1.

2. Cor. 5. 21.

for an afflicted conscience. 31

be made the righteousnesse of God) saith also vnto you, come: yea for your further encouragement he offers, and is readie to take you by the hand, and to go with you himselfe vnto the father, for whose sake you must needes be most heartely wellcome. And if you shall thus answers your Saviour Iesus Christ, that glacie you would come, but that your sinnes doe so clogge, and loade your heart with sorrow: then heare how againe he replies vpon you saying. If the case stand so with thee, then come in any wise, yea therefore the rather come. For if thy sinnes doe put thee to paine, and be as a heauie burden, to bigge for thee to beare, come thy way, and lay them all vpon my shoulders, for my backe is broade enough to beare them all, were they neuer so many. I am well content to beare the whole loade of them mine owne selfe, that thou mayest be fully and for euer discharged. For such sinners doe I call, and such sinners onelie will I saue, as are in paine and throughlie tyred with their sinnes. As for such sinners as haue store of sinnes hanging vpon them, and either doe not feele them, or care for no helpe, I haue

C 3

nothing

Math. 11. 28.
Another reason
of great weight:
will you not
come when your
Saviour calleth
you for your
good.

The tired sinner
may boldly
come to Christ.

Math. 11. 28.
Marke well that
Christ will saue
humbled sinners
and none other.

Math. 9. 13, 13.

nothing to do with them, neither will I be any Saviour vnto them. For, the whole neede not the physicion but the sicke. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Rom. 5. 1.

Ephes. 3. 12.

Ro. 9. 15, 16, 18.

Hebr. 4. 17.

Thus farre I haue endeueured to satisfie your first and maine obiection, and to my power aimed at this marke, namely, to pacifie your troubled conscience with this comfortable and sound persuation, that beeing iustified by faith, you haue peace toward God through our Lorde Iesus Christ, by whome you haue boldnesse and entraunce vnto God the Father, and that by the powerfull working of Gods spirite, which is the spirite of adoption which you haue receiued, whereby you crie Abba Father. The same spirite beareth witnessse with your spirit, that you are the childe of God. And if you bee a childe, then are you also an heire of God, and a ioynt heire with Christ. And therefore not I, but Gods holie spirite in the Epistle to the Hebrewes (whose wordes you ought both to regard and reuerence) saith vnto you in this wise: Let vs goe boldely vnto the throne

for an afflicted conscience. 33

throne of grace, that wee may receiue mercie and finde grace to helpe in time of neede.

I beseech you marke aduisedly that the authoz of the epistle calleth vpon you to goe, and to goe boldly. But whither would hee haue you goe? forsooth to the throne. And to what throne? Not to a throne of iustice, of wrath, and conuiction, but to a throne of grace and mercie. It is indeede a throne of iustice, of wrath, and condemnation, but not to you, nor a-
nie such as you are. The throne against your comming is couered and hanged all ouer from end to end. both wide and side with most rich & costly cloth of grace and mercy. The hangings are al of grace and throughout embzodered with nothing but mercie. View them your selfe, looke vpon them thzoughly, and you shal finde all mercie and nothing els but mercie. Therfore you are willed to come to this throne boldly, because it is a throne of grace and mercie. And that you may knowe before hand what you shall gaine by your comming thither, you are told plainly & truly, you shall find (that which your soul most longeth after) Roze of grace,

Labour to cast
off feare when
God would haue
you bolde,

You are lovingly
called to come to
a louely throne,
hanged all ouer
with hangings
of grace and
mercie.

Mercie welcomes
you.

you must needs
be welcome, for
the Iudge is your
great friend.

Math. 11. 28.

The second obie-
ction and answer.

The troubled
minde cannot
apply Christ to
it selfe.

Adwise your selfe
well, that he that
knowes you calls
you.
Isa. 43. 1.
Feare not, for I
haue redeemed
thee, I haue cal-

and you shall receaue so much mercy as
may heipe you, when you shall stand in
most neede of mercie. Thus must it needs
be, and otherwise it cannot be, because
the Iudge himselfe, who sits vpon the
throne, is a Iudge full of mercie, clad alto-
gether with rich robes of mercy, and your
great friend, who wil shew you all fauor
that may be. For why, he is Iesus your
Saviour, who will in no case suffer you
to miscarie.

Here is good occasion offered to an-
swere a second obiection of yours, which
is, that you beleue, that Iesus Christ
is a perfect and an able Saviour, but not
your Saviour: that he saith come, but he
saith not come to you. But I will prooue
he speaketh to you as well as to any other,
and that as particularly and as plainly as
if he shuld call you by your name, and say,
come M. P. E. I speake vnto thee by
name.

First, you will grant, that in those
wordes (which you finde thus written, in
Mathew chap. 11. verse 28. Come vn-
to me all you, that are wea.y and laden,
Christ Iesus calleth al sinners generally,
you

you are one among the rest. Therefore led thee by thy name, thou art mine, he calls you. For he saith, he came to call sinners to repentance.

Secondly, in the forenamed wordes he calls such sinners onely particularlie and by name as are wearie and laden with their sinnes. Iudge you, whether you be called. Are your sinnes pleasant to your palat, and sweete vnto your taste? Doeth the remembrance of your sinnes make you laugh, as though ye were tickled, when you thinke vpon them? Is it the ioy and pleasure of your sinnes, which drawes so great store of salt teares from your eyes, and fetcheth so many deepe sighes from your heart? Doe your sinnes lie vpon your conscience like some little light feather? or rather do they not presse and holde you downe as a woonderfull weightie burthen? If you be in this case, then may you know, if you will know that which shall doe you good, that he speakes to you by name, and saith vnto you, come boldly and feare not, I will ease thee of all those thy sinnes, which are so great a burthens thy conscience, and will giue thee a gracious generall pardon in my death and passion. Moreover, I will from top to toe couer and cloath thee with

With the rich robes of mine owne righteousness vnto the full assurance of euering life.

The third obiection & answer.
The troubled mind complains of the weaknesse of faith,

Every man complains of his owne paine.

Many deere seruants of God are greatly grieved for the weaknes of their faith.

The third obiection followeth, that your faith is weake, and so weake, as you are fully perswaded there is no childe of God hath so weake a faith as you haue. I perceiue it fareth with you as it doth with one that is greatly troubled with y^e tooth-ach, gout, stone, or some such strong disease, who being in verie great paine, in the extremitie thereof cries out, y^e there was neuer any creature in the world so cruellie tormented. And why saith he so? forsooth because he feeles his own paine, and no other mans beside: therefore he speaks of that which himself feeleth, and not of that which he doth not feele. For there be a great many mo as greatly tormented as he: but he thinks not so, because he doth not feele it so: Thus do you deale, you are greatly troubled with the weaknes of your own faith which you feele: therefore according to your feeling you complaine, that none hath so weake a faith as you haue: notwithstanding there be a great number besides your selfe, who are as much troubled this

for an afflicted conscience. 37

this way as you. But I will take your own words. You say your faith is weake. Yea, then you grant you haue faith. And therefore say I, or rather the Lord himself for your comfort, you cannot possiblie perish. For God so loued the world, that Iohn 3.16. he gaue his onely begotten sonne, that whosoever beleeueth in him might not perish, but haue euerlasting life.

But your faith (as you say) is so weake, that you cannot thinke it to be anie faith at all. And I againe doe answer you with a better warrant than your thought, that a weake faith is a faith, yea a good and a sound faith. The weakenes of faith doth not take away the nature and being of faith, that because there is weaknesse in it, therefore it should cease to be a faith. Will you say a weake man is no man, because of his weakenesse? No, for he is a man though neuer so weake, as long as there is any life and breath in him. Neither doeth his weakenesse take away his goodnes: for he may be a verie good man althongh he be verie weake: So say I of your faith, the weakenesse thereof takes not away y goodnes. It is a good, a sound and a liuely faith, although it be weake. I
neuer

A weake faith is a good faith, therefore make much of it, and labour to strengthen it.

A weake man is a man,

Weaknesse of
faith, a generall
complaint of all
the godlie,

neuer yet heard of anie beleeuing man or woman, but haue complained of the weaknesse of their faith. Nay for my part I haue marked it in sundrie examples, that the more godly and beleeuing, the more they haue complained. I coulde from mine owne experience, name diuerse to proue this point, and some of them well knowne vnto your selfe. But I wil name some one or two out of the Scriptures, and leaue the rest to your owne good consideration.

marke 9.24.
Example of a
weake faith in a
true good man;

You reade in the Gospell of Marke the ninth chapter and soure & twentieth verse of so good and faithfull a man, as you wil your selfe confesse, hee had a true and sincere faith, because hee saide vnto Iesus Christ, Lord, I beleene. Neuerthelesse, this good man was sicke of your disease, and felt his faith to be weake, yea verie weake, and therfore he intreates the Lord Iesus very earnestly, yea crying out with tears saith, Lord help my vnbeleef. &c.

The Apostles
weake in faith.

Again you reade in Saint Lukes Gospell, the seuenteenth chapter and fift verse, of the holie Apostles, whom our Saviour Christ had cholen to preach, and by their preaching to beget faith in others: yet euen

euē these men doe in like maner find and feele great want and weaknesse in their owne faith. For which cause they put vp their humble supplication vnto their Lord and master Iesus Christ, that he would increasē their faith.

So that now you see verie plainly, there is no cause, why you should too much discourage your selfe, with the consideration of the weaknesse of your faith. Because the best and most faithfull seruants of God, doe halt of this soze as well as you, and shall doe as long as they liue in this world. For there is no perfection of any good grace in this life. We see and know in part, and therefore must needes also beleeue and practise in part. Perfection is no where to bee found but in heauen, that that we may long to be there, and so bee fully perfect. God bleth this as a holie and good meanes rightly to humble you and many of his deare children for your good, that by the true feeling of this weaknesse, and many other infirmities, you may see how much neede you haue to runne continually for strength and succor at the handes of your sweete Sauour, who hath throughe supplied all your wants,

Weaknesse and wants will waite vpon vs to our graue.

1. Cor. 13. 9.

Weaknesse of faith a speciall meanes to humble vs.

wants, and who will so strengthen you, that your faith (though neuer so weake to your owne feeling) may neuer faile you. For which purpose I would haue youe to lay sure holde of these wordes full of sweete comfort, deliuered vnto Peter by our Saviour Christ, for the strengthening of all the faithfull. Simon, Simon, Sathan hath desired to winnow you as wheate, but I haue prayed for thee that thy faith faile not. Marke I pray you, how Iesus Christ promisseth to pray for Peter, and not for him onely, but for all the faithfull. For is hee onely Peters Saviour? is he not also the Saviour of all the faithfull in the world? Is hee not your Saviour as well as Peters? yes truly. Then he will pray for you also. For so he sayth in that most sweete prayer which hee makes to his heauenly father, for all the faithfull which shall beleue in him to the worlds ende. I pray not for these alone, but for them also which shall beleue in mee through their worde. And if hee in whom onely the father is wholie and altogether well pleased, and for whose sake hee can not bee displeased with you, doe praye for you, shall

Luke 22. 31.

All the faithfull
are as deare to
Christ as Peter,

He prayeth for all
the faithfull as well
as for Peter, and
for you,

Ioh. 17. 20.

Math. 3. 17.

for an afflicted conscience: 41

shall not bee heard, and his prayer
fullie graunted: Yes it can not be de-
nied.

But yet you say hee speaks to Pe-
ter, and promiseth to pray for him by
name. Yea, and that is as much as if he
should call you by your name, and say that
he will pray for you, and for so manie as
Satan hath any desire to winow. But sa-
tan hath a great desire not onely to wi-
now Peter, but all the rest of the faith-
full also. For so are Christs words, say-
ing, Sathan desires to winow, not thee,
but you, as if hee should say, his malice
is not against one alone, but against all.
Therefore as all must looke to them-
selues: so Christ promiseth to praie for
so many as are winowed, and particu-
larlie for you, because you can tell that
you are winowed. And whereas it plea-
seth the Lord thus to winow and sift your
faith, you may be sure not to loose, but
to gaine thereby. For this you know,
the more the good coyne is sinned, and
winowed, the cleaner it is; and the olt-
ner golde is put into the sinning-pot, the
more pure and excellent it is. To this end
therefore are you sined after this manner,
that

Christ in Peter
speakes to all the
faithfull by
name.

Sathans malice is
deadly against all
the faithfull.

1. Pet. 1. 7.

that the triall of your faith being much more precious then golde that perisheth, though it bee tried with fire, might bee found vnto your praise and honour, and glorie at the appearing of Iesus Christ.

The fourth objection and answer concerning prayer.

Cold prayer better then no prayer.

Now I come to answer a fourth objection of yours. That you cannot pray. What, can you not pray at all: can you neuer pray? Yes you thanke God for his mercie, you can pray sometimes, but neither so often, nor so zealously as you desire, and as your neede enforceeth you. Sometimes you pray, but verie coldlie, and with verie little or no feeling. Sometime you pray more earnestly, and for all that, you find small comfort. And sometimes though you doe what you can, you can not praye for your life. This is as I knowe by some wofull experience a verie iust and true complaint: yet I remember when I demanded whether you could praye at anie time, you could not denie but you could pray sometime, and I am perswaded with good feeling and sweete comfort to your soule. Whereupon I proue once againe to your conscience, that
you

for an afflicted conscience. 43

you haue a true faith vnto saluation, because prayer is an vndoubted, and plaine fruit of a liuely faith, accompanied with euerlasting saluation: for whosoeuer Rom. 10. 13. calleth vpon the name of the Lord shal be saued.

Praier is not a common gift, com- Prayer no common but a special gift given to the elect. mon to all, but a speciall gift, proper onlie to the elect, as faith and repentance. The Apostle saith, All men haue not faith, 2. Thesslon. 3. 2. so say I, all men haue not the gift to pray. A wicked man can not pray, because he can not beleue, for praier is a most excellent fruit of faith. The vngodly haue not this gift in truth, or in any good measure, howsoeuer they haue many other excellent gifts of wisdom, counsell, & learning, yet they want this, which the Prophet doth plainly auouch, saying of them, that they call not vpon God: as though he should say, they do many other things, but they doe not this, and no maruell, for indeede they cannot, because they want that spirite which should teach them to pray, for the spirit helpeth our infirmities, and praierh in vs, yea this same spirite of sanctification which hath wrought a gracious mea-
D sure

sure of Faith and Repentaunce in your heart hath taught you also to pray, and to take so great delight therein, that you are glad when you can pray your selfe, or can be partaker with others when they pray.

Prayer is not a
common gift.

The godly can-
not alwayes pray
as they would.

But you say sometimes you cannot pray at all, and therefore you doubt your selfe very much. If you could pray when you would, and as you would (beare with my plainnesse, for I speake from the feeling of mine owne heart) you would be proude, you would thinke it were but a gift of nature, in your owne power and no gift of God: so should God loose his glorie, so should you soone forget the right vse of a notable blessing, and forget also to be thankfull. Nowe you haue it but seldome, or not so often as you would your selfe, you knowe from whome you receiue it, and when you haue it, you vse it with more reuerence, and make more account of it, you take more ioy in it: and when you want it, you groane to God for it the more earnestly. It is verie needefull and much for your profit, that the Lord would excuse the best of his seruants with the want of manie blessings and graces both for their
bodies

The want of ma-
ny blessings and
graces is very
needefull and
profitable.

bodies and soules. It is good some
 times to be sicke, that we may knowe ¹ To be sicke,
 how good a thing it is to enioy the bene-
 fit of health. It is good sometimes to
 be hungerbitten, that our meate may ² Hungerbitten,
 be the more sauourie, that we may be
 the more thankfull for our foode, that
 we may receiue and vse it more reue-
 rently, and the more willingly releue
 such as stand in neede. It is good for
 vs some nighes to be abridged of our na-
 turall sleepe, that we may know there- ³ To want sleepe,
 by, that it is the Lord who giues rest ^{Psal. 127. 2}
 vnto his beloued. It is verie meete we
 should sometimes be troubled in con-
 science, that we may knowe how pre- ⁴ To haue a trou-
 cious a blessing that is aboue all others, bled conscience,
 to enioy the peace of conscience, and to Peate of conscy-
 labour about all things to attaine to it, ence a pretious
 and to maintaine the same. It is good blessing,
 for vs sometimes to be cleane to seeke
 haue to praie, that when we can praie,
 we may be the more humble, reuerent and
 thankful.

But if you like to stand vpon this point
 to bryge the same against your selfe, I
 will as in the sight of God, to his glorie,
 and mine owne shame, confesse the truth

unto you, as it is with me in this thing. I haue more cause a thousand fold, to doubt my selfe herem, then you haue, by reason of the great calling which the Lord hath layed vpon me, being a minister and teacher of the word. Therefore the Lord be mercifull vnto me a wretched sinner. For my wicked euill heart is so narrow and baren in prayer, that many times I cannot pray at all. And this fails out not onelie in my priuate meditations betweene God and mine owne soule, but in my daile prayers with my household, wherein I haue beene forced for the most part to vse, and that almost word for word, a short prayer, which I haue set downe in a short Catechisme for the helpe and furtherance of such as are vnder my charge. And if vpon some speciall occasion offered, I indenuour my selfe to pray otherwise, it is such poore, drie, naked, and sillie stuffe, both for words and matter, that after I haue prayed, I am a great while maruelously tormented in conscience. And I should be utterly ashamed, that you or any other should come within the hearing of my babling prayers. And assuredlie, were it not that I felt
some

This hath beene in former time, now through Gods grace it is otherwise, yet perfourmed in great weakenesse, and with many wants, besides some speciall exercise an other way sufficient to abate the pride of my heart, and to keepe me vnder.

some more gracious assistance, from the Lord in those prayers, which are offered by in my publike ministerie, I could haue small assurance of Gods louing fauour towards mee. This I confesse according to the truth, that you may know you are no more alone in this point, than in the former, and to intreate you to pray for me, following the good aduise of the holie apostle Saint James, who counsel-
leth vs, to confesse our sinnes one to James 5. 16. another, and to pray for one another.

But alas say you, how should I pray for you, when I can not pray for my selfe. If you cannot pray in set wordes, and in fine order, can you not therefore pray at all? can you not sigh and groane inwardly, in the true feeling of your soul, as one that is so greatly oppressed with griefe, that he hath not a tongue to utter that which he hath within his minde. If you can sigh and groane, after this manner, be of good comfort. For you haue learned long since, from some of your faithful teachers, who haue many times soundlie taught this point from the word of God, and that o^r purpose for the relief of weake

True prayer is not
a set order of fine
wordes,

consciencs, that you pray verie effectual-
lie. Your sighes are prayers which the
spirite, from whom they proceed, under-
standeth right well, yea although there
is not so much as anie one worde bite-
red to expresse them. Wordes are for
our vnderstanding, that we may thereby
knowe one anothers meaning. But the
holie spirite which is our comfortable
schoolmaster, and searcheth the deepe
things of God, knowes our meaning and
thoughts before we speake, yea although
we speake not at all. For as the Prophet
Dauid saith, He knowes our thoughts
long before. And the Apostle saith, the
spirite helpeth our infirmities, for we
knowe not what to pray as wee ought,
but the spirite it selfe maketh requests
for vs with sighes, which cannot be ex-
pressed.

These sighes breaking out violentlie
from the consciences of the godlie, are
prayers, and loude cryes, acceptable to
the Lord, and pearcing deepe into his
eares, as appeares in Exodus 14.15.
Where the Lord demaundeth of Moses
why hee cryed so vnto him, whereas the
wordes of the Text make no mention of
anie

Psal. 139. 2.

The sighes of
the Godlie are
acceptable
prayers.

anie one worde hee spake or vttered . I pray you tell mee this one thing, if the childe of your owne bodie , whom you loue dearelie , and which is vnto you as your owne soule, shall be sicke , and being full of paine , shall moene him selfe vnto you , tell you howe sicke hee is, where his paine doth holde him, and shall entreate you euen as you loue him . to doe what you can to ease him , will you not doe it both willingly and readilie : yea , will you not doe whatsoener you are able euerie kinde of way for the ease of your deare dearling : But if his paine shall encrease and growe so great, that it takes awaie his speech , so as hee is not able to speake a worde , but to fetch deepe sighes , and to moane himselfe vnto you by most grieuous groanes , will not these groanes pearce your heart more deepeilie, and cause the bowels of compassion to perne in you more strongly , to straine your selfe euen to the vttermost of all your power to assooꝝe him as much comfort as is possible, both by your selfe & by others : shall the groining of your child worke great pittie in you, and shall not the the mightie groanes of your poore sicke

A simile.

The Lord exceedeth all men in p^ro^priety and compassion, and therefore will heare and helpe you readily.

Psal. 51. 17.
The sighes of the spirit are to be regarded.

Ezekias could not pray, but chatter.

Esa. 38. 14.

soul, moue the Lord your God to greater compassion: If in such a case you will be so readie to heare and helpe, know you for certentie the Lord will be more readie to heare and helpe, whensoever you shall in the anguish of your soule groane vnto him. For looke how farre he exceeds you and all other in goodnesse: so farre also doth he exceede you and all other in mercie and compassion.

Beside all this, there is no sacrifice more acceptable in the sight of God, then the sighes and groanes of a troubled minde. For so saith the Prophet. The sacrifices of God are a contrite spirit, a contrite and broken heart O God thou wilt not despise. Therefore make as good account of the groanes and sighes of the spirit, as of any prayer you can make, euen in the best wordes you can deuise, And for a farewell of this matter, remember that the godlie and good king Ezekias, could not in smooth and fine wordes, poure out his prayers before the Lord in his great sicknesse, but chatter like a swallow or a crane, as hee confesseth of himselfe. Consider also that the poore Publican, being a-
shamed

for an afflicted conscience. 51

shamed of himselfe, by reason of his sinnes, and feareing to lift his eyes toward heauen, could not deliuer his minde at large, in fit, and choise words, but with much paine, at the last he breakes forth after this manner, O God be mercifull to me a sinner. Neuerthelesse our Sauiour Christ giueth sentence on his side, that he went home more iustified, then the proud Pharisee, who had both words and winde at will.

The Publican
prayed humbly,
but said little.

Lu. 18-9, 10, &c.

Your first obiection doth thus offer it selfe, That you cannot leaue sinne. And that which doth more trouble you, you cannot leaue those sinnes, which you haue vowed to leaue, but you fall againe into them. First you reason thus against your selfe, that you can not leaue sinne. No maruell, for although you be one of Goddes saintes, and haue receiued the spirit of sanctification in measure, to fight the Lords battels against sinne, and hell: yet are you no Angell in this world, so as you can altogether cease to sinne, because you carrie, and shall carrie vnto your graue, a bodie, and soule subiect to sinne. Therfore you must fight this battel
euen

The first obiection
and answere,
of leauing sinne.

Sinne cleaves row
fast to our nature
to part with it in
halie.

No perfect con-
quest over sinne
vntill death.

Christian con-
rage and armour.

Eph. 6, 13, 14,
&c.

Be carefull to
fight Christ his
battell, and feare
not the issue.

euē so long as you haue breath and life. This enemye of yours is so strong, that he will neuer be fullie overcome, vntill you haue ouermasted him by death. And then you shall haue a full and perfect conquest ouer him and all your enemies. In the meane time, plucke vp a good heart, gird you fast with all your Christian armour, put on your complete harnessse, and euerie part thereof, as you finde it set down in the sixt chap. of the Epistle written to the Ephesians, take your weapon in one hand, I meane the sworde of the spirite, and your buckler in the other, that is to say, the shield of faith. Lay about you lustily, with all the strength and running you haue. Yea, bee strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. And feare not the issue, although you lanch and catch many a soze blowe, no though you be soiled and wounded, because you haue a valiant captaine Christ Iesus your Saviour, who hath already himselfe gotten the victorie for you, and who will not shrink one foote from you, vntill such time as you also haue gotten the victorie. For in all these things wee are more then conquerours through him that loued

for an afflicted conscience. 53

vs. Rom. 8. 37. And that you may haue the more courage to fight this field without fainting, vnderstand thus much, that all the faithfull doe ioyne hands with you to fight out this batteil.

All the faithfull
doe fight one
and the same
batteil.

The holie Apostle Paule had receyued a great measure of sanctification aboue manie thousandes of Gods children: yet could not hee get the full mastery ouer sinne, but that full soze against his will to his hearts grieve hee sell into it. Therefore with sorrow of soule, hee complaines in the seuenth Chapter to the Romanes. That the good which he would he did not, but the euill which hee would not, that did hee. And that it may be well vnderstode, that this was not onelie a sharpe hote skirmish, for a shoyt fit, but a set battle to continue to the ende of his life, you may reade howe after sundrie and diuerse greivous complaints of his owne weakenesse, and of the strength of sinne, as a man that is wearie of his life, for no cause but this onely, that he could not leaue sinne, hee breakes out into these wordes of great passion. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliuer mee from the bodie

Rom. 7. 19.

Paule fought a
bloudie field
with sinne.

Vult 24.

Paul could not
leave sinne as he
desired,

bodie of this death? In which speech he doth betwray two things. First that hee could not leave sinning, although it was his whole studie, and the onelie thing among manie, which he most earnestlie desired. Therefore he calles himselfe a wretched man, because he carries about a bodie of sinne and death. Secondly, that hee had as longing a desire to cease from sin, as any man could haue. And therefore hee asketh this question. Who shall deliuer me?

The godly would
faine leave sinne,
and so would you
with all your
heart.

Mat 5. 18.

The godly sinne
not willingly as
the wicked.

Nowe tell me I beseech you, is it not thus with you? Would you not faine leave sinne if you could, and that with all your heart, are you not wearie of it, and sore grieved for it? Must it not needs bee thus, because you complaine so greatly, you can not leave sinne? You sinne in deede, but not willingly, nor of set purpose; you drawe not sinne vnto you with cart ropes, as the wicked doe, but you are violentlie drawne by the furie and violence of sinne. You hunt not after iniquitie, to pursue and followe after it, with the inticements thereof. But sinne hunts and pursues you, till you haue lost both winde, and strength, and so
it

it may bee, you are manie times taken prisoner. In which case you are no more to bee blamed, then a Souldiour, who in battell is full soze agaynst his will taken prisoner of his enemye, which thing is most manifest to your owne conscience, because when you are taken, and you perceiue it, you behaue your selfe as a man, which is fallen into his enemies hande. For your heart is greeued, and your soule wonderfully troubled, your sleepe departeth from you, you can eate no meate that doeth you good, you take no pleasure in anie worldlie thing, there is no mirth in you, but you are all heauie and sad. If you bee in companie, where you are prouoked to bee merrie, you laugh but for companie: for it is but from the teeth forwarde. To bee short, so long as you are holden captiue of anie sinne, you are wearie of your life. Therefore all your studie is howe you maie breake off the fetters of sinne, and bee deliuered, whereto you applie all your wit, power, cunning, and skill: And if through the great goodnesse of God, you get anie aduantage to escape, there was neuer anie soule more glad

The godly study
how to breake
off the fetters of
sinne.

glad of a faire day, or bird that hath
broken out of the fowlers net, more ioy-
full then you are of so happie deliuerance.
And when you are deliuered you are e-
uer afterwards more carefull a great
deale that you fall not againe into your e-
nemies hand.

The wicked do
trade in sinne.

Mat. 7. 33.

Pf. 1. 3. 3.

Coloss. 3. 2.

It is better with
you then you
thinke for, and
therefore be
thankfull and
cheere vp your
heart in the
Lord,

Againe you make not a trade of sinne,
to follow it dayly and hourelye as the
workers of iniquitie, who follow it as
carefully and continually as any man
followes his occupation whereby hee
must liue. But the trade which you
follow, and the way wherein you walke
with delight, is the continuall medita-
tion of the lawe of God, with an earnest
desire to practise it in your whole conuer-
sation. Your minde and affections are
not set vpon the earth, but vpon hea-
uen, and vpon those things which may
bring you to heauen. Therefore in the
true acknowledgement of Gods great
mercy towards you, you may with peace
to your soule saie with the Apostle
Paul in the seventh chapter to the Ro-
mans and the siue and twentieth verse, I
thanke God through our Lord Iesus
Christ, because in my mind I serue the
lawe

lawe of God, although in the flesh, that is in that part, which is vnteregnerate I serue the lawe of sinne.

Touching that other point, namely that you fall often and againe into that sin, which you haue vowed neuer to comit againe: for as much as the same is against your wil through great infirmitie, and not of anie set purpose, although I wish you in anie wise to be as carefull as may be therein, and to vse all good and holie meanes of watching ouer your affections and auoiding all those occasions, whereby you may bee drawen forward into anie the least sinne, by praying, fasting, and such like holie exercises, whereby you may be better strengthened against all assaultes of sinne: yet would I not haue you to discourage your selfe too much with the consideration thereof. For this you knowe that one which walketh in a slipperie way or vpon ice, may against his will, yea though hee looke neuer so well to his feete, not onely take the first, but the second, and the third fall, yea manie falles, notwithstanding that he thinketh to set his foote maruelous sure.

It is no wonder in this corruption to sine often in the same sinne,

All good meanes must be vsed against euerie sinne,

Consider well and apply with currence,

Abraham fell
more than once
into one sinne.

These examples
are to comfort
such as would
leau sinne, and
not to encourage
any to liue in
sinne.

Abraham although hee was the father of the faithfull, and for his godlinesse highlie commended in the Scripture: yet through great weakenesse, lyed first in Egypt to Pharaos, in denying Sarah to be his wife, Genesis the twelfth chapter and thirteenth verse. Againe hee fell into the selfe same sinne vnto Abimelech, the king of Gerar, Genesis the twentieth chapter, and second verse. Sarah also gaue her consent both times, and was partaker of the sinne. Isaac their sonne vpon the ike occasion, so readilie coynd a lie, as if his father and mother had not only by practise, but by precept taught him to lie. I knowe both what I say, and to whom I speake, for as these examples and such like, may not, nor ought not, to make vs bolde to runne headlong, or to continue with delight in anie sinne great or small: (for then wo vnto vs) so they serue to comfort vs, that wee stand not ouermuch amazed at our daylie slippes in sinne.

The first obiection
concerning
hardnes of heart.

Nowe followeth a first obiection concerning hardnesse of heart, That you can not profite by the worde preached, and there.

therefore thinke it were as good or better
 not to heare at all, as to heere to no pur-
 pose, and profit. For hardnesse of heart,
 which is the first branch of this obiection,
 I answer that it is a principal part of the
 corruption of the old man, which clea-
 nely fast vnto our nature, and is one of
 our mortall enemies, which will haunte
 vs vnto the death. For our faith shall be
 exercised therewithal, as long as we shall
 liue in this world. Therefore our best re-
 medie is to arme our selues with the ar-
 mour of proofo before rehearsed, and to
 buckle wih this armorie, whose edge
 and courage, by little and little shall be a-
 bated. And for your encouragement this
 I say, that flesh and bloud hath not ope-
 ned your eyes to see this to be a sinne, nei-
 ther touched your heart, with a misliking
 thereof: for then you might long ago
 haue found out this and manie other
 sinnes, when they raigned in you more
 strongly, and caried you headlong, with-
 out any resistance or misliking into much
 euil, to commit sin with great greedines.
 But then you could find no fault at all
 with your selfe, nay you thought your self

Hardnesse of hart
 will hang vpon vs
 and haunt vs to
 the death,

Looke well to
 your armour,

Blesse gods name,
 that now you see
 and greeue for
 that sinne which
 in former times
 you neither saw
 nor greeued for,

Your case all one
with the Apostle
Paul Ro. 7. 9. &c.
Acts 26. 9.

in as good case as was possible. And no
maruell, because you were blinded
through the darkness of your owne un-
derstanding and reason, so as you could
iudge no colours.

Give God leaue
and he will helpe
that which you
can not,

Psal. 37. 14.

A generall com-
plaint of the best.

Now, through Gods goodnesse, for
the welfare of your soule, your eyes which
were blind, are opened to see those things
which you neuer saw before, and your
heart is touched with a wonderfull mis-
liking of that which before you leued.
Yea indeede you must needes confesse, you
see and feele your hardnesse of heart, but
you cannot helpe nor amend it. No, but
the Lord both can and wil helpe to amend
whatsoever is amisse in his time. In the
meane time, do what you can, be pati-
ent, tarie the Lords leasure, wait vpon
him, and he shall comfort thine heart.

Where you say, you cannot profit by
the word of God preached, that is also a
generall complaint of all such as are most
carefull to profit. But your owne words
do proue against your selfe, that you doe
profit. For if you profited not, how comes
it to passe that you haue found out this
fault, that you cannot profit. It is not the
manner

for an afflicted conscience: 61

manner of such as doe not receiue profit by the word preached, to find fault, but to please and flatter themselves most, when they profite least. Therefore this is a great argument and sound prooofe of your profiting, in that you can thus blame your selfe, that you doe not profit. And it pleaseth the Lord thus to exercise you and the rest of his beloued ones, with the feeling hereof, not to discourage you, but that this may be as a whetstone to sharpen your stomake, to heare with greater conscience, and as a spurre to make you more eager vpon the word, when it is preached, that the oftener you heare, you may desire more and more, to profite by hearing.

The complaint of not profiting is verie profitable, because it makes you carefull to profite.

But where as in the end, you throwe downe this logge in your owne way, that it were good, not to heare at all, I am to giue you speciall warning, as you tender the saluation of your owne soule, to take heede howe you giue consent to that temptation, in the least thought of your heart, for it is a strong enchantment of Sathan, to bewitch you withall, and a choise baite to catch your soule

As you loue your soule take heede of this temptation

The deuill him-
selfe hate- pica-
ching (more than
holy water) be-
cause it ouerthro-
weth his king-
dome.

Math. 4. 10.

The deuills craft
in reasoning.

in euertasting destruction. He knowes
this as well as anie man can tell him,
that the word preached is the onelie most
principall meanes, which God hath or-
dained to strengthen you against the
whole batterie and force of al his tempta-
tions. Vee knowes also that from
thence you daylie gather courage against
him. Whether it be thus or not, I ap-
peale to your conscience. And if you haue
found this powerfull worke in your owne
soule, then so often as hee shall thrust in
this temptation say vnto him auoyde
Sathan, for thou labourst to murder my
precious soule, by withdrawing me from
the meanes of my saluation.

But howe doth he vize this point a-
gainst you, and with what reasons. First
because you doe not feelee profit present-
lie. Secondlie because you doe not pro-
fite so much as you should. Nowe
marke I beseech you the deuills craft
in reasoning. First you feelee no profit by
the word presentlie so soone as you heare
it preached: therefore you doe not profite
at all. You feelee not profite presentlie,
therefore you shall neuer feelee profite.

You

for an afflicted conscience: 63

You shall see this cunning laied open to your vnderstanding in a familiar example, after this manner. A sicke man hath a phisicke giuen him to helpe his sickness: He is not helped presently so soone as hee hath taken it: Therefore he shall neuer haue helpe. The husbandman doth sowe his seede, and casts it into the ground, that it may growe and bring forth fruit: But it growes not so soone as it is sown: Therefore it will not growe at anie time, neither shall hee euer reape anie croppe of his seede.

The devils cunning laide wide open by sensible reasons.

Againe hee reasoneth thus against you, you profit not so much as you should, or not alwayes alike: Therefore you profit not at all. This is as if one should reason after this fashion. One acre of corne some yeare brings forth five, tenne, twentie, or a hundred fold: But it doth not so euerie yeare: Therefore it brings forth nothing at all. Some yeares an occupier gaynes a hundred pound by his trade: Hee gaynes not so much euerie yeare: Therefore hee gains nothing. Thus the deuill reasoneth with you

therefore be your selfe iudge of his maner of reasoning, and the Lord in mercie giue you wisdomie, in all things to take heed of his wilfulness, that you be not by him any way abused,

The last obiection concerning euill thoughts.

Ierem. 17.9.

The heart is like a bottomlesse pit which can neuer be drawen drie.

The seventh and last obiection is, concerning euill thoughts, which arise in the minde, wherewith I know, some are not a little troubled, for comfort of whose weake consciences, which are many times ouer much greued by the consideration thereof: I answered thus from the Prophet Ieremie the seventeenth Chapter and ninth verse: that the heart is deceitfull, and wicked about all things, who can know it? By which place (if my iudgement doe not much abuse mee) this one lesson may be rightlie and kindly gathered, that when the best men and women haue done their best, to their best power, they shall neuer attaine, or come to the perfect, and full knowledge of all the corruption, and filthinesse which is there hatched, and harboured: because it is like vnto a bottomlesse pit, which can neuer be drawne drie. Whereupon I reason thus.

If

If we shall neuer in the whole course of our life, come to the thorough, and full knowledge of all that venemous poison, which is deepe rooted in the dungeon of our vnderstanding : how then shall it euer be possible for vs, to attaine to the perfect reformation of so manie disorders, as are there to be found. Again the Lord himselfe saith, That all the imaginati-
Genes. 6. 5.
 ons of the thoughts of mans heart, be euill, onelie euill, and that continuallie. If all be euill by nature before we be regenerate, and bozne a new by a second birth of the spirit, and word, and that continuallie : then no maruell if some be euill, and that continuallie after our regeneration. Because wee be renewed but in part, and we haue so put
Ephes. 4. 24.
 on the new man, which after god is created in true holinesse and righteousness, as that we shal neuer cleane, and altogether put off the old man with all his deceiueable lustes, vntil we put off this flesh, and that by death.

In this one point standeth a great part of our Christian warfare, wherem we are at all seales and seasons, to stand

This is our taske
to our dying day,
to fight against
our affections
which are our
deadly foes.

1. Pet. 3. 11.

Our vnuly and
foully lusts do
yawe vs continu-
ally.

Faith and prayer
are our bell ar-
mour.

Proverb. 16. 31.

upon our garde, and to watch with all
diligence, inwithstanding the euill affec-
tions and thoughts of our hearts, which
as Peter saith fight against our soules.
For these be such spirefull enemies, as
lodge themselves close euen in the closet
of our heart, they eate and drinke with
vs, they sleepe and wake with vs, they
ride and goe with vs, they goe out and
in with vs: to be short, when our other
enemies, the worlde. and the diuill doe
graunt vs some time of truce, these will
assoyd vs no peace, because they lie so
neare vs, as that euermore they are at
hand ready to assault vs, both before and
behinde, and on euery side. Therefore we
are to the uttermost of our power, to
arme our selues strongly against them by
faith, by prayer, and all other good and ho-
lie meanes. That wee maye daylie get
ground of them, and through Gods
grace, ouermaister them in some good
measure, to our euermore comfort. The
rather because the wise man saith. He
that is slowe to anger, is better then a
mightie man, and hee that ruleth his
owne minde, is better then hee that
winneeth

wineth a citie.

But euen now while we are speaking of euill thoughts, there comes in one, with a most lamentable complaint, saying, Sir, I am so troubled this way, as I thinke there was neuer anie childe of God so grieuousslie troubled. For I haue such wicked and blasphemous thoughts, as make my flesh to tremble, and all my bones to shake, yea they are such as they almost drine me to dispaire, when I thinke vppon them. For they strike not at men, but at God himselfe. They exalt themselves against the persons of the Trinitie, and some of them against the blessed, and holie Scriptures. What they bee in particuler, I am ashamed to speake. If you bee ashamed so much as to name them, then I perceiue you take no great liking of them, neither doe you meane to entertaine them. And therefore I answere in fewe wordes, they shall not be able to hurt you. If I regard wickednes in my heart (saith the Prophet) God wil not heare me. We doth not say, if there be any wickednesse at all in my heart, or anie thought of wickednesse.

(For

A wofull complaint against euill thoughts.

Psalm 66. 18.

It is one thing to
haue euill thoughts,
and another, to
like of them, and
delight in them,

(For who can say, my heart is cleane,) but if I regard wickednes, that is, if I delight in it, or meane to nourish it within me, then I am sure the Lord will not heare my prayer, nor shew me any fauour. But as if the Prophet should say, and as I am sure you doe say, that is farre from me, to take delight in any such vngodlie, and blasphemous thoughts, yea so farre, as I am not more grieued for any thing, then for this, that any such thought should come into my minde. And therefore hee and you, and you as well as he, may bee vndoubtedly perswaded, the Lord will neither reiect you, nor your prayers, which in Christ his name, you shall offer vp vnto him.

And whereas you thinke it so strange, to haue so euill thoughts, to arise in your minde, and that you are perswaded, there are no more so tempted beside your selfe, I answer vpon mine owne knowledge, you are therein greatlie deceiued. There bee manie who are euen as much troubled with the same, or with as euill. And this I dare auaunch, that the most godlie are not free, but are subiect vnto

The most godly
are not free from
euill thoughts;

for an afflicted conscience. 69

to most vngodly thoughts, although they yeeld not vnto them. First because they as well as others, doe carrie with them, a cursed corrupt nature, which is the roote from whence all euill springeth. Secondly, because they haue such an enemy, as will not spare to tempt them to the greatest euill, yea, to this, then the which there can be none greater, namely, to curse God: as the iust and holy man Job was tempted. But as that good man withstood the temptation, so doe they fight against euery euill motion, and are preserved.

Rom. 7. 10. and
psal. 51. 5.

Job tempted to
curse God, not
in his heart, but
with his mouth,
Job 1. 7.

Yet there is one thing more concerning euill thoughts, which is, that you can not be rid of them, but that euery, and anon they come into your minde. To this I answer, that the sooner you checke them, and the more strongly you resist them, the sooner a great deale, shall you bee rid of them. First, you must resist: for, resist the deuill and he will flee from you. And heere marke, that this resistance, must be by the word, and by prayer. Secondly, you must resist egerly, and speedily. And therefore as David hastned
to

1. Pet. 2. 11

1am 4. 7.

The ready way
to be rid of euill
thoughts, is to
resist them.

1 Sam. 7. 48.

Math. 4. 12.

Rom. 8. 37.

Rom. 4. 25.

to fight against Goliath, and with courage flung a stone so hard, that it sticke fast in the foreheade of the vncircumcised Philistin: so must you speedilie strike at euerie such thought, so soone as you shall perceiue the same to put out his head, and once to arise in your minde. And as Iesus Christ, being tempted of the diuell to fall downe and worship him, at the same instant gaue him his answer, saying, avoid Sathan: so must you giue them a present answer, and send them packing to the diuell of heil, from whence they come, and whither you are in all haste to returne them. If when you haue done what you can, you finde your selfe too weak for them, & that they be too hard a great deale for you, then turne your captaine Christ Iesus to them, who hath so fullie conquered for you, as that howsoeuer they shall assaule you continuallie, and manie times foile you, yet shall they neuer get the full victorie ouer you, but you in your captaine shal be more then a conquerour ouer them and all the rest of your deadlie enemies, for Christ was deliuered to death for our sinnes, and rose againe for our iustification.

for an afflicted conscience. 71
fication. To him therefore be glorie for
euer and euer, Amen.

Thus you haue the pledge of my good
will towards you & manie others, which
I haue not done to exclude anie grace or
blessing of comfozt which you may receiue
in greater measure, from your owne god-
ly pastor (most careful of your estate) but
that you may more highly account of so
excellent graces of God in him. And that
what soeuer is wanting in this my
poore treatise, may by him
bee more fullie
supplied.

FINIS.